

Message Text

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ACTION AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6858

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, IN

SUBJECT: AID FY'75 SUPPORT OF AAFLI

REF: STATE 029423

1. STATUS OF AAFLI IN INDIA AT THIS POINT IS UNCERTAIN. WHILE THE INTUC HAS DEFINITELY INFORMED AAFLI IT DOES NOT WISH TO HAVE PROGRAMS WITH THE INSTITUTE, THE HMS HAS NOT YET TAKEN A DECISION ON ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH AAFLI. CONCERNING AAFLI'S PLAN TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE IN INDIA, THE INTUC HAS NOT YET OFFICIALLY INDICATED WHETHER IT WILL ASSIST AAFLI IN THIS MATTER, WHICH REQUIRES GOI AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, WE HAVE INFORMALLY BEEN TOLD BY INTUC ASSISTANT SECRETARY RAM LAL THAKAR THAT INTUC CANNOT HELP. WHETHER THE HMS WILL SPONSOR AAFLI'S PETITION TO OPEN AN OFFICE IS NOT KNOWN. A SENIOR LABOR MINISTRY OFFICIAL HAS ADVISED US THAT EVEN IF THE HMS WERE TO RECOMMEND TO THE GOI THAT AAFLI BE ALLOWED TO OPEN AN OFFICE, THIS RECOMMENDATION WOULD NOT CARRY MUCH WEIGHT. AAFLI REPRESENTATIVE HERBERT WEAST IS HOPEFUL THAT FINANCE MINISTER SUBRAMANAIAM WILL ASSIST IN THIS REGARD, AS HE IS REPUTED TO BE A CLOSE FRIEND OF P.L. PERUMAL, A MEMBER OF THE HMS WORKING COMMITTEE AND A FRIEND OF AAFLI. COMMENT: GIVEN INTUC'S NEGATIVE ATTITUDE, WE DOUBT THAT THE FINANCE MINISTER WILL BE WILLING TO BE OF MUCH ASSISTANCE TO AAFLI.

2. THE BUDGET PLANNED FOR FY'75 WOULD APPEAR TOO LARGE, SINCE IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT THE LARGEST UNION CONFEDERATION, THE INTUC, WILL NOT ACCEPT AAFLI PROGRAMS. THE BUDGET IS ALSO PRESUMABLY

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PREMISED ON THE OPENING OF AN AAFLI OFFICE AND THE UNDERTAKING

OF THE PROGRAMS WITH THE HMS. AS NOTED ABOVE, THESE QUESTIONS REMAIN TO BE DECIDED. IF PERMISSION TO OPEN AN OFFICE IS DENIED, WILL AAFLI SEEK TO CONDUCT PROGRAMS IN INDIA, SUPERVISING THEM FROM A NEARBY COUNTRY? UNTIL THESE ISSUES ARE CLARIFIED, THE MISSION DOES NOT BELIEVE IT CAN COMMENT ON THE LEVEL OF THE FUNDING REQUESTED OR THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO CRITIQUE THE SPECIFIC PROJECTS PROPOSED.

3. CONCERNING THE GOI'S AWARENESS OF AID AS SOURCE OF AAFLI FUNDS (PARA 2 REFTTEL), WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE GOI HAS OFFICIALLY BEEN ADVISED OF THIS FACT, ALTHOUGH GOI OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN INFORMALLY TOLD ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS. SOURCE OF AAFLI FUNDS HAS ALWAYS BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AND HAS BEEN NOTED PUBLICLY IN USIS PUBLICATIONS DISTRIBUTED WIDELY IN INDIA. THIS ISSUE WOULD, OF COURSE, BE DISCUSSED WHEN AAFLI FORMALLY REQUESTS GOI APPROVAL TO OPEN AN OFFICE.

4. SUGGEST THAT AAFLI BUDGET BE HELD TO PRESENT LEVELS UNTIL AAFLI'S FUTURE IN INDIA IS CLARIFIED. TASK ORDER CAN BE AMENDED SUBSEQUENTLY TO FUND NEW ACTIVITIES AS DEVELOPMENTS WARRANT.
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